

CHARIVARIA.

It has been decided that King Lud shall not be represented in the London Pageant. The Luds seem to be in for a run of bad luck just now.

In spite of Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S statement, the Government, it is asserted, has decided to withdraw a few commas from the Budget, realising, apparently, that the only alternative would be a full stop.

"The Master of Elibank is a great success as a money-finder for party purposes," says a contemporary. This will scarcely surprise the French newspaper which refers to the Chief Whip as "Le maitre de la Banque d'Eli."

President TAFT, after having shaken hands with 1,700 visitors at the White House the other day, refused to proceed further with the operation. This was, we suppose, the only way to save his valuable sunny smile.

Fifty-two million ladybirds, a New York cable tells us, which were reared in the State Insectary, Sacramento, are being transported free of charge in special railway carriages to Californian melon fields to keep down certain insect pests. We like the idea of "special railway carriages"—with notices, we imagine, above each bench: To SEAT 10,000 LADYBIRDS. Indeed, one can almost hear the gruff voice of the harassed guard crying: "Now then, ladies, move up on that seat, please: there's room for one more."

The *Daily Mail* has published an account of what it describes as a "prosperous butterfly and moth farm" at Bexley, Kent, and now we are simply longing to see a prosperous butterfly—though we think we can just picture the *blasé* creature, slightly given to *embonpoint*, lolling at full-length on a convolulus, in blissful ignorance of the Budget, and calling for a small honey with a head on.

It is rumoured that the Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery is of the opinion that the lady in the painting ascribed to VELASQUEZ is not Venus, but merely an artist's model. It is certainly significant that she stubbornly refuses to turn round and face the public.

We would have given a good deal to be present at the National Gallery when

the eight grave and reverend art experts, armed, we imagine, with magnifying-glasses, telescopes, and opera-glasses, examined the Rokeby Venus. The scene must have been strangely reminiscent of the incident of Susannah and the Elders.

The Meteorological Office has decided to issue forecasts of the weather for several days ahead. We must confess that as a rule we would rather not know too much on this matter.

The remarkable absence of London fogs during the fog season which ended in March shows that our atmosphere is now undoubtedly less polluted with smoke

is up in arms because *Le Matin* has called that city the "little" port of Hull. We trust, however, that it is not a fact, as *The Daily News* states, that the Mayor has written to the Parisian editor objecting to the description "*le petite*," and calling on him to make the *amende honorable*. It looks as if the amendment should come from this side of the Channel.

The following advertisement caught our eye in *Bradshaw* the other day:—"Nottingham. Flying Horse Hotel. Established 1483. *Under new management.*" How the centuries bring their changes!



SOCIETY GOSSIP.

"BIZNESS IS VERY SLACK, 'ERB—NOBODY ABAMT—W'Y IS IT?"
"W'Y, DON'T YER KNOW, 'LIZA? 'OUSEHOLD BRIGADE STEEPLECHASES, O' COURSE!"

than formerly, and Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL'S wisdom in abolishing the small boy's cigarette is more apparent than ever.

The Sour Milk diet for prolonging life is making such headway that our economical Government is said to be thinking of making it a condition as regards the pensions of all civil servants that the recipients shall undertake not to adopt this elixir.

The Metropolitan Police have issued a regulation providing that all new taxicabs must be fitted with horns of a uniform nature. This knocks on the head Dr. STRAUSS'S proposal that a complete taxicab orchestra should be formed.

Hull, we learn from *The Daily News*,

With reference to the letter in *The Daily Mail* from a gentleman who complains that, while seated in the stalls of a theatre, he was stabbed in the back by a hat-pin which a lady had thrust through the back of his chair in order to fix her head-gear there, a fair correspondent writes to us to point out that such accidents could easily be avoided by men wearing a steel plate, instead of a flimsy lining, at the back of their waistcoats.

"The MULLAH," said Lord CREWE, in replying to Lord CURZON'S complaint that we were proving ourselves the good friends of our enemy, "is a sort of successful freebooter." As a freebooter is, we take it, a near relation of a freefooder, one can understand the Government's attitude.

During the trial of the Countess TARNOWSKA, it was related that on one occasion, at a theatre, the lawyer PHILUKOFF leapt, at her instigation, from his box to the stage. An enterprising music-hall manager is reported to have at once booked this turn.

"The Household Brigade Steeplechases take place at Hawthorn Hill on Wednesday and Thursday. Special trains will run from Paddington to Taplow, and motor-omnibuses will be in waiting at Taplow to convey them to the course."—*Daily Telegraph*.

This is luxury: from Paddington to the paddock without changing.

From a *Pall Mall Gazette* poster:—

"FOLLOWING AN ELOPING WIFE.

REMARKABLE SPURT IS . . . RUBBERS."

We have often said that goloshes make the best running shoes for this kind of work.

TO MR. HALDANE IN MUFTI.

[The War Minister was put up to introduce the first of the "Veto Resolutions."]

As when a man with breast of steel,
Who many a time through seas of blood,
Sabre in hand and spur at heel,
Has dealt the foe a fearful thud;
Alone in dongas, after dark,
Has mown the rebels down in batches,
And been the object of remark
In various picturesque despatches;—

As when a warrior such as that
Puts off his military gear,
Assumes the sombre suit and hat
That fit a plain civilian sphere,
And, posted in a clerkly pew,
His task to check accounts and file 'em,
Subsists as secretary to
A club, or lunatic asylum;—

Reared in a sternly virile school,
Where discipline comes first and last,
He does his duty, as by rule,
But oh, his dreams are with the past;
Visions of gore that will not wash
Smile from the blood-red office blotters;
His heart is still at Stellenbosch
Tracking DE WET's elusive trotters;—

So I have seen you, Dog of War,
Shin down from off your fiery barb,
Undo your trappings, aft and fore,
And don an academic garb;
Have seen you slough your martial pride
As though I saw a lion doff its
Pelt for a lamb's civilian hide—
HALDANE among the Veto prophets!

Those "Resolutions," doomed at birth,
Like "good intentions," graven fair,
Which form, to make Olympian mirth,
The paving-stones of we know where—
How could you join this paper feud
Which members of a party gang wage,
You with your figure stoutly thewed,
Your soldierly command of language?

Indeed, on such a doubtful case
Your lips were never meant to speak;
You have the warrior's open face;
Your soul is stamped upon your cheek;
Stick to your game—the clean, bright blade—
"R. B. for England!" on your banner,
And leave the politician's trade
To men who lack the Army manner!

O. S.

From *The Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary*:—

"Whereas it appears to the Lieutenant-Governor that certain *dhotis* (waist-cloths) having on their borders a poem entitled "Farewell Mother" . . . contain incitements to violence. . .

"And whereas . . . the said *dhotis* (waist-cloths) are documents within the meaning of section 2, clause (b) . . .

"Now therefore . . . the Lieutenant-Governor hereby declares all copies of the said documents wherever found in Bengal . . . to be forfeited to His Majesty. . ."

We can imagine an indignant Bengali explaining volubly to a policeman that it didn't mean "Farewell Mother" at all, but "All wool, unshrinkable."

MR. ROOSEVELT IN PARIS.

RAPTUROUS WELCOME.

(From our Special Representative, Signor Piccolo Magico.)

MR. ROOSEVELT'S tour, as it goes on, fully justifies my description of it as a unique tribute to a personality which has deeply impressed the whole world, vegetable and animal, as well as human. His reception in Paris has been something pyramidal. As for the scene at the Comédie Française last night, it was such as I have neither seen nor heard of before. The house was largely filled with students from the Latin Quarter, and between the Second and Third Acts of *Frou-Frou* loud cheering was heard. Happening to notice that MR. ROOSEVELT was not in his place, I left my box and quickly hurried along the corridor. I found him making a speech to the students on the Latin genius as exemplified by the histrionic profession. One passage which struck me as singularly impressive was the following:—

"The energies of the actor, if they are continuously devoted to the realistic portrayal of mean, ignoble or undesirable characteristics, cannot but react disadvantageously on his moral fibre. Contrariwise, if the actor, or actress, exclusively devotes his or her best talents to the impersonation of such characters as are only noted for their integrity, honesty and piety, it is more than probable that in the long run his or her soul will be braced and toned up to a higher level of moral achievement."

The students were hypnotised by MR. ROOSEVELT'S vehemence, and by his sledgehammer sincerity. Strong women wept like men; several fascinating *soubrettes* were reduced to hysterics; and a young French nobleman, renowned for his command of English slang, observed in my hearing, "Golly! What a corker!" MR. ROOSEVELT wound up a speech which lasted for thirty-five minutes, and contained sixty thousand words, by a poignant and soul-shaking appeal to the students to be true to the ideals of the ancient Romans. "Rome," he said, "was not built in a day, and the Latin Quarter cannot be adequately described in a quarter of an hour." As the Third Act of *Frou-Frou* was now approaching its conclusion MR. ROOSEVELT reluctantly returned to his box.

Friday morning.—I have just returned from witnessing one of the most beautiful and touching sights that has ever fallen to the lot of a modern journalist. I refer to the visit paid this morning by MR. ROOSEVELT and his son to the *Jardin des Plantes*. Never since the memorable preaching of St. FRANCIS to the birds has a great man exhibited such gracious condescension to the brute creation. In such circumstances some men would have gone armed to the teeth, but MR. ROOSEVELT did not take with him even a revolver. The note of perfect friendliness towards the inmates was set at the very beginning of the proceedings when MR. KERMIT ROOSEVELT was lowered into the bear-pit, climbed to the top of the pole, and ate several buns with an exquisite courtesy and grace. Confidence being thus established, MR. ROOSEVELT went the round of all the cages and enclosures, addressing a reassuring sentence and in some cases a pithy and stimulating exhortation to each. What, for example, could have been happier than this genial address to the giraffe?—

"Your height exposes you to great danger, for, as a witty writer has said, giants are generally their own killers. Console yourself, however, with the reflection that the possessors of long necks are seldom subject to apoplexy."

Very felicitous, again, was the mode in which MR. ROOSEVELT introduced his son to the oldest lion in the gardens:—

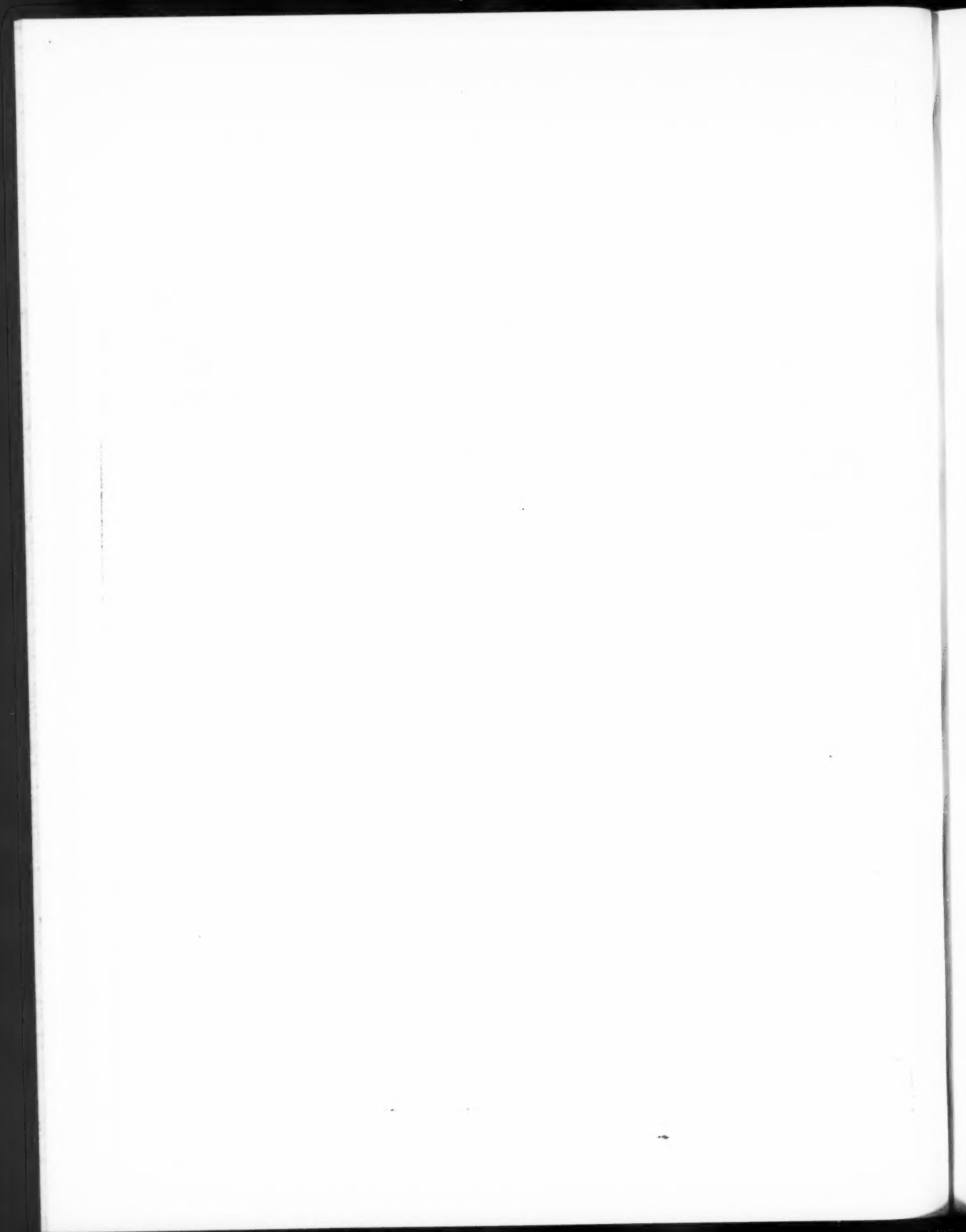
"Monarch of the forest, allow me to present to you my cub KERMIT."

Great satisfaction was expressed in the monkey-house at the friendly admonitions which the EX-PRESIDENT addressed to its agile occupants:—



THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

BUDGET BILL. "WELL, FATHER, AREN'T YOU PLEASED TO SEE YOUR CHE-ILD AGAIN?"
ENTHUSIASTIC PARENT. "OH, IT'S YOU, IS IT? Welcome Home!"





(On the last green—a fiver on the match.)

First Stockbroker (having just holed out). "WHAT ARE YOU DOWN IN?"

Second Stockbroker. "WELL, WHAT ARE YOU DOWN IN?"

First Stockbroker. "I ASKED YOU FIRST."

"Some unthinking critics have compared you to man's poor relations. It is not your poverty, however, that is a legitimate object of criticism. It is your dangerous indulgence in the practice of mimicry which exposes you to the charge of a vulgar obsequiousness." Mr. ROOSEVELT also specially appealed to the chimpanzees to avoid excessive indulgence in tobacco and spirituous liquors.

"For sale 9 h.p. 2 cylinder Clement, tonneau body for 4 . . . Owner getting larger."—*Exchange and Mart.*

Owner must take it in time with plenty of fresh air, sponge baths, and no sugar.

"A woman calling herself Jane Warton was sentenced on January 11th to a fortnight's imprisonment in connection with the Liverpool suffragette disturbances. The authorities have just discovered that she is really Constable Lytton."—*Wanganui Herald.*

Now he knows what it's like, he won't be so ready to arrest the next deputation. (But didn't anybody miss P.C. Lytton?)

"THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE.

"John Trotter, B.Sc. Thesis — 'Bis-p-methoxybenzylidenedimethylpyrone, and some of its Derivatives.'"—*The Scotsman.*

Lucky that the "bis" didn't come at the end of the word, or he might have had to say it all over again.

"SUFFOLK.—You are not correct; Nelson, the great British Admiral, was born on September 29th, 1878, at Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk."—*Evening Star and Daily Herald.*

All the same, we would bet that "Suffolk" made as good a shot as that.

A CUP TIE EPISODE.

[A weekly paper recently advocated weeping for men as "the true elixir of energy and the greatest of Nature's restoratives."]

On our football aspirations fortune very seldom frowned,
For our wings were very speedy and our centre very sound;
And the total of our victories went gaily mounting up,
Till we figured in the final of the Gutta-Percha Cup.

I remember every incident connected with the tie,
How the trams were running crowded and our hopes were
running high.

We had youth and skill and backers of a sort that seemed
to me

Quite sufficient to intimidate the boldest referee.

Now it may have been our nervousness at such a stringent
test,

Or it may have been the subtlety the other side possessed;
But, at any rate, the fact remains, when half the game was
done

They were actually leading us by three good goals to none.

When we went to the pavilion for a breather and a rub,
We were sad at such a blot upon the 'scutcheon of the club;
And we felt the sorrows people feel when every hope departs,
So we busted out a-weeping fit to break our little hearts.

And the tears were so effective that the match's latter bit
Saw our eyes a little reddened but our feet exceeding fit;
And, before the final whistle put a limit to the score,
We had vigorously walloped them by seventeen to four.

CITY CHAT.

"I WANT to be rich," said Charles thoughtfully.

"Then buy rubber," said Algernon from behind his evening paper. "Sell your holding in Tapiocas and buy rubber."

"How do you buy it?"

"I don't know. I'm a child at business. I think you go to the telephone and just buy it. You don't want any money—only a loudish voice."

"Have you ever made money on the Stock Exchange or anywhere?"

"Never. Oh, well, I once made a penny on the Post Office Savings Bank. My father, with the idea of encouraging thrift, put in a pound for me when I was fourteen. Nothing further happened until I was fifteen, when I drew it out again. Interest of a penny had been accruing all this time . . . but I never applied for it."

"In a thousand years that penny will come to—to—to quite a lot at compound interest."

"Yes, we used to work it out at school. It was about four million billion pounds. I shall leave it to you, Charles; and in the event of your death to the Middle Classes Defence League. I trust that they will spend it wisely."

Charles was silent for a long time.

"I don't understand," he said at last, "what this rubber boom means. Why should rubber keep on going up in price so much?"

"Because so many more rubber trees are being planted," suggested Algernon. "No, that must be wrong," he admitted generously.

"What is rubber used for except for tyres and golf balls? There's no new demand for it, is there?"

"Mats with 'Welcome' on them are always made of rubber. I'm ordering one with 'Good-bye' on it. It will be placed just inside the door where it catches the eye at once, and will be made entirely of rubber."

"There are goloshes, of course."

"And sandwiches. 'A thin slice of india-rubber and two pieces of dry bread, please, Miss.' Yes, there are plenty of ways of using it."

"But these are all the same old ways. That's what worries me."

"Why be worried about it at all?" asked Algernon. "All you've got to do is to take advantage of it, and buy shares in the"—he referred to his paper—"in the Burra Burra Development Company, Limited."

"Oh, is that a good one?"

"The very best. Our old friend Colonel John Tench, late of His Majesty's Indian Army, and now of Ravenscourt Park, is a director. Also Lieutenant Wilbraham of the Royal

Navy and Addison Road. Also Mr. Fritz Oppenstein. Those names always inspire me with confidence."

"I've never heard of them before."

"Neither have I. But they sound exactly right. Probity and shrewdness simply ooze from them—probity from the first two, and shrewdness from the other."

"Yes, but how much rubber oozes from them? That's what I should want to know."

"Dear Charles, you are very hasty. How can rubber ooze before the trees are grown up? How can trees grow up before they have been planted? How can they be planted before the estate has been cleared? How—"

"But if there's no rubber—"

"I hadn't finished. How can the estate be cleared before it has been bought? How can it be bought before you, Charles, have come out with the money? Now you see."

"Then it will be years before any rubber is ready for sale at all?"

"Years. But what a harvest when it comes. In 1920, it says here, they expect to produce 500,000 lbs. of rubber. Putting the net profit on rubber at four shillings a pound—"

"Why?" asked Charles.

"Well, they must put it at something. Putting the net profit at four shillings a pound, you get—well, there you are, that's what you get."

"But I can't possibly wait till 1920. Hang it, that's an awful long time. I always thought one made money on the Stock Exchange much more quickly than that."

Algernon looked at him compassionately.

"My poor friend, how little you seem to know. You talk as if you really wanted a piece of india-rubber, and would have to wait ten years for it. Never mind about the rubber; you buy the shares."

"Look here, I suppose you know that I don't want to spend money, I want to make it."

"Quite so; and I didn't say you pay for the shares, I said you buy them."

"And then what do I do?"

"Then you wait. To-morrow, perhaps, some refreshment contractor lays in a new stock of sandwiches, or there is a great demand for wedding-cakes, or I buy my mat; naturally the price of rubber goes up. Naturally, also, the price of your shares. Next day the Burra Burra manager cables that they've been having perfectly glorious weather out there, with just a few nice showers to bring up the rubber trees if they had been planted. So sensitive is the Stock Exchange that the shares shoot up still further. Next morning there is a

photograph in *The Daily Mirror* of a man who has made £10,000 in three weeks over rubber; of course, hundreds of its readers rush in to do the same; up go your shares again. In the afternoon somebody discovers that there really is a place called Burra Burra, and that rubber trees have been known to survive there. Once more the shares go up. At the end of a week or so you sell—and there's your money."

"There's the money," echoed Charles. "And not only the money, my dear Charles, but the feeling that you have earned it nobly, that you have done something for the Old Country with it. You have helped to expand the Empire; you have served your time as a captain of industry; you have been a landed proprietor and an employer of labour. Ah, Charles, Charles, it is men like you who make the world go round."

"Y-yes," said Charles doubtfully. "Er—could you lend me five pounds now?"

A. A. M.

"WAIT AND SEE!"

[Vide Mr. Asquith's answers, *passim*.]

SCHEMES are shattered, plots are changed,
Plans arranged and re-arranged!
Words are eaten; every day
Broken pledges thrown away;
Here the riddle—where the key?
Wait and see!

Does his wandering course reveal
Only love of Britain's weal?
Does he toil through heavy saad
Seeking how to keep his land
Clean and prosperous and free?
Wait and see!

Is it that he turns his eyes
To a goal that needs disguise?
Just a paltry party score,
Checked by some about him, more—
More particular than he?
Wait and see!

Is he one whose wavering mind
Lightly veers to every wind,
Hither pitched and thither tossed,
While the country pays the cost
Of his flaccid vertebræ?
Wait and see!

Be it not that he has so'd
All the faith that men should hold
Sacred; that he walks his ways,
Flogged by those whom he obeys,
At whose word he bows the knee—
Wait and see!

Wait and see, and wait again:
But the country waits in vain.
Waits for order—finding none;
Sees but duty left undone.

* * * * *

What will Britain's verdict be?
Wait and see! DUM-DUM.

A PLEA FOR GREATER VARIETY IN THE BALLROOM.

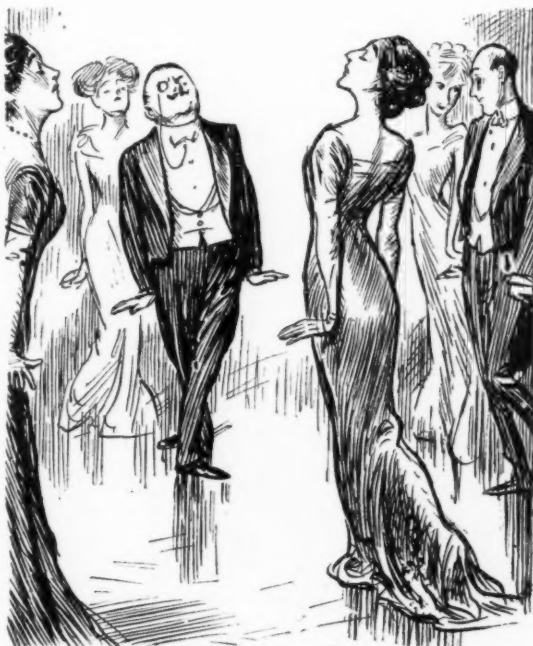
WHY NOT ADAPT TO PRIVATE USE SOME OF THE DANCES WE HAVE BEEN RECENTLY SHOWN AT THE MUSIC-HALLS? FOR INSTANCE—



THE "CONSTANCE" COTILLON.



THE "APACHE" POLKA.



THE "SALOME" LANCERS.



THE "VAMPIRE" VALSE.

A SPECIMEN PAGE FROM OUR OWN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY.

HOMER AND THE MODERN SPIRIT.

No man, least of all a Scotsman, is at all times aware of the depth of his own ignorance. I did not know until last week that there existed in the Saxon kingdom of Saxony—a town named Naseweis; nor am I become conscious of the University of Naseweis. Naturally enough, therefore, the existence and the activities of Pro-



Afternoon tea in Trinidad.

For in not know week that isted in the Saxony—is such a king-not sure named Na-had I be-



THE DUCHESS OF DINGWALL IN HER CELEBRATED DRYAD DANCE.

fessor Hildebrand Bummelstecher of that University, have been, if I may say so with all respect, a sealed book to me. My own fault, of course.

Dr. Bummelstecher, like most German Professors, has strong views of his own (on HOMER in this case), and has written a book all about and about them, as the little girl said. Why should German Professors write so much about HOMER? Why is there nobody to ask them, as Lord MELBOURNE once asked somebody, if they can't leave it alone? However, we must take things as we find them, and as Dr. Bummelstecher's book on HOMER runs to 2,059 closely printed pages, exclusive of preface and notes, I need hardly say I found it solid, and, in its own way, highly German.

Dr. B. treats HOMER very much de

haut en bas. He is like the village umpire who, when asked for "middle"



HOISTING THE BRITISH FLAG IN THE MOLASSES.

From left to right:—H.H. The Shugar of Khandi; General Sir John Beet, K.C.M.G. (Governor); Colonel Cane, V.C.

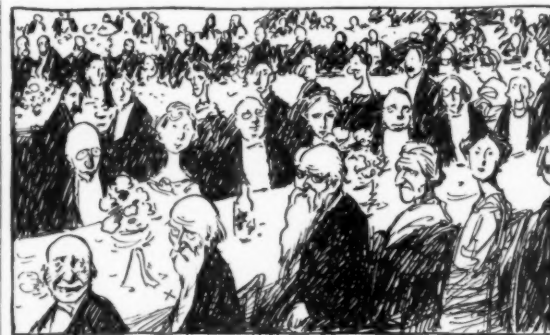
by a player in a rival team, promptly gave him out leg before wicket. It was



REPORTED DEATH OF THE EX-SULTAN OF TURKEY. Typical Street Scene in Adrianople.

magnificent, but it wasn't cricket. In the same spirit Dr. B. puts HOMER aside.

The Professor, in fact, is very short with poor HOMER. He does not show him even the ordinary courtesy of the South Sea Islanders, who, before they



BIRTHDAY OF BRITAIN'S YOUNGEST CENTENARIAN. Mr. James Wilson and his descendants dine together at Royston.

club their aged relatives to death, invariably ask them whether they would prefer beads or banana skins as a head-dress for the impending funeral cere-

monies. Dr. B. simply brings his book down on HOMER's head and makes an end. I don't know how the learned world will regard this inhuman treatment, but I am fully conscious that there is at gorgewhich to rise. And happens no earth can wigs from to the green balls.



Mr. Winston Churchill on his way to Bond Street.

I am all for politeness towards Professors, and even when they launch



A PRETTY SOCIETY WEDDING.

Mr. Walter Jones and Miss Phyllis Tattlewell at St. Mark's, Peckham.

literary *Dreadnoughts* at me I refuse to proceed on the principle of two keels to one. One small torpedo will settle the Professor's hash well enough. If he is still dissatisfied after that I may refer him to the remark of the headsman to the Laird of Dalwhipple who had complained that the axe did not look sharp—"It'll carve your heed, my man," was that amiable functionary's reply.

After all, HOMER's *Iliad* is still the best, and so is his *Odyssey*—much better than Bummelstecher's. That is the long and the short of it, as the Cambridge scholar said when they asked him to define a trochee. Professor Bummelstecher is a spondee, and a German spondee at that. He is all length—2,059 pages, exclusive, as I have said, of preface and notes. He has a rod and a line, but he has forgotten his fly.



Unemployable Gentleman (on seat). "WOT O, BILL! GOT A JOB? 'OW D'YER LIKE IT?"

Ex-Unemployable. "SO 'SO, CHARLIE—IF ONLY THE SUDDEN CHANGE DON'T PLAY 'AVOC WIV MY CONSTITOOTION."

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES.

WE were in the compartment next to the engine and there were five of us. There was myself (first always). There was the Old Man, who looked as if he owned a large estate in Herefordshire, but probably did not. There was the Daughter, who despised her father but was not going to let you despise him. There was also the florid Business Man, who was trying to look as important as his despatch case. We were strangers, but we felt we must be talking, so fell to abusing the Great Western Railway Company. I love the old G.W.R.! I abuse and abuse and abuse it, and it gets fatter and redder in the face and more prosperous every day.

This time it was the heating of the carriages. Personally I had been thinking that ours was much too hot already, but the Daughter was as headstrong as she was handsome, and insisted that it was not hot enough. The Old Man obviously had no feelings of his own; I sank mine in the good cause, and it never transpired what the feelings of the Business Man really were. It was clear that he had very strong feelings, and that was enough for us. So we set to, and said whatever occurred to us;

and any other railway company but the G.W.R. would have just stopped its train then and there, and have gone and wept in its goods-yard before we had finished. But the old G.W.R. merely rushed through Warwick shrieking and rocking with laughter, and that just about finished the Business Man. He started with insinuations of gross carelessness, went on to impute dishonest motives, and concluded with a shout that steps must and should be taken in the matter. At that we all puffed ourselves out and determined to make the most of ourselves by fair means or foul.

The Business Man had the first go, because it was his idea. He said he knew the Traffic Manager of the District (I have no reason to suspect that he was telling the truth), and would let him have a piece of his mind. Being a man in complete control of his temper, he had only done this once before, and on that occasion the traffic had been completely reorganized in the railway universe, and the manager in question had taken to his bed for three critical weeks. The Business Man would have liked to develop the incident, but we all wanted our turns, and the Daughter showed signs of getting hers by force. So he briefly recapitulated the circumstances

and bound himself to raise—what I must not mention—in influential circles. His speech could not have been more interesting had we even known whether he was complaining of the heat or the cold.

The Old Man began muttering about the station-master at Leamington, whose intimate friendship he was just about to claim, when the Daughter started in. I could not help being curious as to what official she was going to know. He was, I do not doubt, a carriage-cleaner of sorts to begin with, but I saw the lucky fellow being promoted all the time the Business Man was talking. He ended by being something vague but imperial, the reigning monarch at Paddington. She would send George (George came as a blow to me) round to Paddington the first thing on Monday morning, and we need not have any doubt that reigning there would become at once quite a different affair. She was not going to be put upon in this disgraceful way. George would see to that all right. I felt when it came to my turn that I must go one better. I must know a Director. But why confine myself to knowing one? Trying to look as much like a person used to Directing as possible, I said, "I am myself a



A CRISIS.

Village Organist (to new Vicar). "WE MUST 'AVE SUMMUT DONE TO 'UN, ZIR. WHEN I DO PLAY THE AMENS THAT THER' NOTE DO HANG ON TO 'UN TILL I HAVE TO PRIZE 'UN UP WI' A ZHUT KNIFE."

Director. I will sack everybody. This shall not occur again." That took all their breaths away but did not otherwise affect the temperature. Nevertheless we were all proud and contented with ourselves till the fifth passenger intervened.

You remember I said there were five of us. I did not tell you who the fifth was because it was not worth while. You have forgotten all about him? So had we. He was just a man in a corner, a poor labouring man who could not be expected to know the Chairman of the Board, and, apart from Royalty, there was no one else left. But wasn't there? As the train came to a standstill in Oxford station, he poked his head out of the window and shouted to the engine-driver:

"Bill, old man," he said, "we're perished in 'ere. Put us a bit o' steam through the pipes."

LITERARY GOSSIP.

(BY OUR INDEPENDENT CRITIC.)

Thus far the books of the Spring have been somewhat lacking in personal interest; but this reproach will be removed by the publication of Mr. Thody Lyon's *Reminiscences of the Upper Ten*. It is a remarkable fact that the only commoners mentioned in this charming narrative are Mr. GLADSTONE, Mr. BALFOUR and ROBERT BROWNING. The *dramatis personæ*, so to speak, include two emperors, seven kings, thirty princes and

seventeen dukes, and one chapter has the significant and impressive heading, "Ego et reges mei."

THE WORLD'S WORTHIES.

Famous luminaries of the past coruscate in the pages of the numerous new memoirs and historical books promised by the famous firm of Scriven and Scoop. *Fascinating Fairies* is the bewitching title of a volume from the vivid pen of Mr. Paul Corporal, in which the inner life of Byzantine Society beauties is set forth in glowing colours. Mr. Peter Prior has edited the *Diary of Semiramis*, and Mr. James Tibbitts has written a monograph on CLEOPATRA, showing the deep interest evinced by the Egyptian queen in social reform and the emancipation of women. A fantastic sociological romance, entitled *Blue Beard's Wives*, by Miss Clarissa Richardson, is also imminent, which the publisher's reader pronounces to be teeming with ineffable *bonhomie*.

GIANTS AT HOME.

Dr. Gabriel P. Dreffler writes of *The Patagonians at Home*, in a book shortly to be published by Messrs. Odder and Strange. As a colonist in that country, Dr. Dreffler has enjoyed peculiar facilities for studying its inhabitants and noting their ways, and he has embodied his observations in a thrilling volume telling us how the Patagonians play and fight, what they eat, how they dress and dance. The volume will be enriched by an appendix on Patagonian music by Mr. BAMBERGER, and a photograph of a giant sloth listening to Mr. BAMBERGER playing the violin in a captive balloon.

BRIC-À-BRAC.

Mr. Alexander Nibbs has completed a novel which he quaintly and effectively christens, *Hindhead Let Loose*. A famous man of letters who has read the manuscript pronounces it to be "at once scintillating, contemptuous and abysmal." Messrs. Flathers and Bluff are the fortunate publishers of this impending masterpiece.

Following on *The Mystery of Barry Ingram*, by ANNIE SWAN, which Messrs. CASSELL announce, we note the promise of *The Enigma of Clement K. Longman*, which Miss Charlotte Wuthering will shortly publish with Messrs. Esher and Fisher.

"Gibraltar, Tuesday.

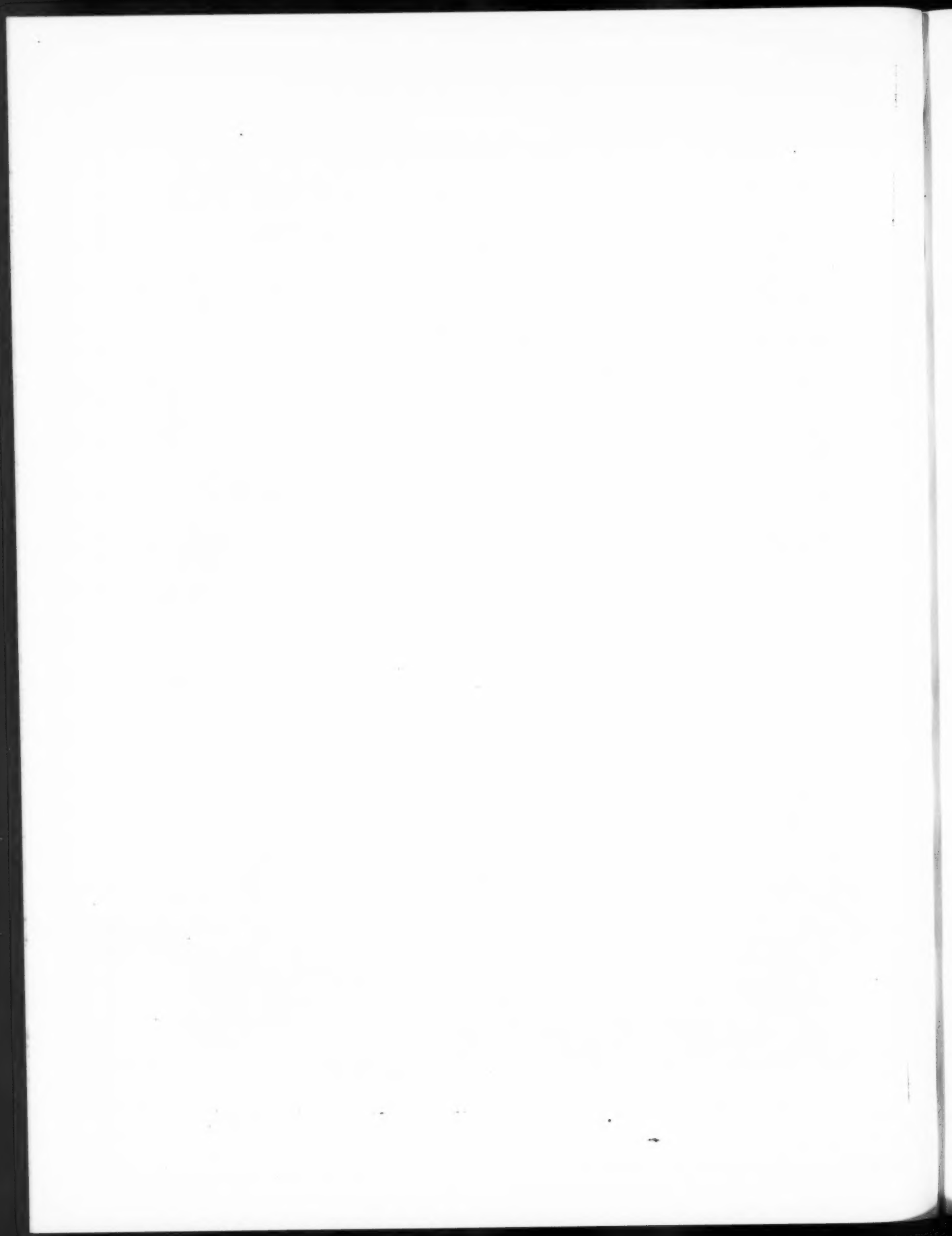
"The annual mobilisation of the fortress began last night, and will end on the 14th inst. The Artillery will occupy positions on the upper level of the Rock, and the Infantry will occupy positions on the upper level of the Rock, the Infantry being on the lower level."—*Newcastle Daily Journal*.

"This is the very level," said the Infantry, when it knew what it had got to do.



THE CONSTITUTION IN THE MELTING-POT.

THE THREE WITCHES. "DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE!"—*Macbeth*, Act IV., Scene 1.



ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, April 4.
—In old Fourth Party days there was a Parliamentary game much in vogue known as "drawing" GLADSTONE. Three or more could take part in it. As a rule GRANDOLPH led off, putting to the PREMIER highly controversial question more or less subtly devised in form of commonplace search for information. Mr. G. having replied, WOLFF nipped in with supplementary query. This also met with painstaking courtesy. Then up gat JOHN O'GOEST, who, with profuse acknowledgment of the great goodness of the PREMIER to humble Members of the House, made engaging appeal for further enlightenment.

In this way some minutes of valuable time were lost. Occasionally Mr. G., beginning to smell the rat which everyone else saw moving through the air, grew angry. Then followed a scene which crowned the achievement of obstruction.

As compared with current opportunities the Young Men of the 'Eighties were hampered by the wholesome restriction, then and for many years later operative, strictly limiting the range of supplementary questions. The old barrier removed, we may, as appears at every sitting, have a brisk little debate on any question that appears on the Paper.

This afternoon, by concerted action in which no fewer than fourteen Members



NEVER TOO LATE TO MAKE AMENDS.

Citizen Asquith (to M. le Condamné). "Ah! Monsieur le Marquis de Lansdowne! Your friends complain that I disregard the decencies, the decorums (pour ainsi dire) of the Revolution. Alors! I come now to give you the details the most minute of the tumbrel in which you will do me the favour to travel, of the guillotine which will have the honour to interrupt a career the most distinguished; tout!—everying!! That will be all-a-right, hein?"

"They (the Government) disregarded even the decencies and decorums of a great revolution."
—Lord Hugh Cecil.

took part, some interposing half-a-dozen times, elaborate attempt at "drawing" ASQUITH was watched with amusement by crowded House. The morning papers brought their readers to tiptoe of expectation. "Awkward Questions to the Premier" was a common headline pointing to anticipated dilemma.

But HENRY HERBERT does not lend himself to this game with the enthusiasm that marked the acquiescence of emotional Mr. G. He underwent the process with the equanimity that marks a duck's submission to ablution by water. In crispest tone, shortest sentences, chillingly matter-of-fact manner, he replied in succession to the fusillade.

"Will the next Vote on Account be taken before the Parliamentary recess?" asked EVELYN CECIL.

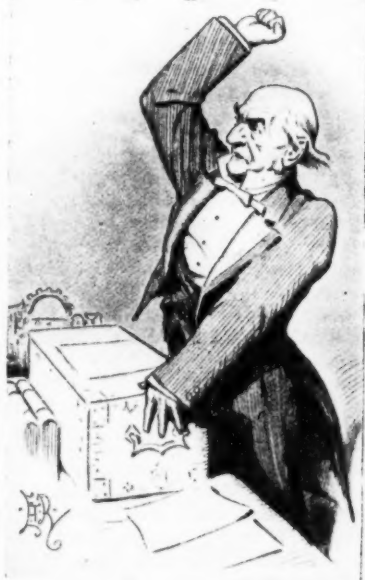
"Yes," said the PREMIER.

"Arising out of that answer"—and CECIL went on to put another poser.

"I do not think that arises out of my answer," remarked the imperturbable PREMIER. "I said, 'Yes.'"

What's to be done with a Minister

who thus strictly conforms to the injunction that your conversation be Yea, yea, and Nay, nay? Once, almost laps-



"Occasionally Mr. G., beginning to smell a rat... grew angry."



"Winterton popping up."

ing into verbosity, the PREMIER met persistent curiosity with the remark: "The hon. gentleman had better wait and see."

This such a success that he from time to time repeated it, till the performance developed into what HALSBURY would call "a sort of" duet. COUSIN HUGH, STANLEY WILSON, LONSDALE, HOPE, WINTERTON and CASTLEREAGH popping up in succession chanted a query to which came from Treasury Bench the bass refrain, "Wait and see."

The phrase thus accidentally evoked stuck. Has already established itself amongst small wits as a catchword. Nothing new under the sun. The MEMBER FOR SARK recalls a curious coincidence. Twenty-four years ago, the eternal Irish Question breaking out in fresh place, OLD MORALITY, not yet Leader of the House, was despatched by the MARQUESS to make personal investigation at Dublin. During his absence the Government were pestered in the Commons with enquiry as to what course they intended to pursue. The stock reply from the Treasury Bench developed into the formula: "Wait till we hear from Mr. Smith." ASQUITH characteristically puts it with fewer syllables. But it's the same thing.

Thus doth history repeat itself.

Business done.—By majority of 103 in House of 608 members Opposition amendment to proposal to go into Committee on the Lords' Veto defeated.

Tuesday.—Having what FABER called "a very nice Tuesday afternoon." Nothing but tea and muffins lacking to domestic charm of gathering. Suddenly bolt falling out of the blue tumbled into the teacup and there was deuce of a storm.

It was the WINSOME WINSTON who launched it, apparently without design. Supporting motion to suspend Eleven o'clock Rule in order to get forward with the Veto Resolutions, he dropped hint that as soon as Resolutions are carried through Commons they will be introduced in Lords.

Arrangement, as more than ever meaning business, enthusiastically cheered from Opposition Benches. Corresponding depression in Ministerial camp. The House half empty whilst WINSTON spoke, began to fill. GEORGE WYNDHAM on his legs, lamenting subjection of Government to Irish masters. PREMIER sent for. PRINCE ARTHUR hurried in. Informed of new turn of events, plunged into fray. COUSIN HUGH followed with shrill demand to "have done with this foolish mystery-mongering."

Effect upon CARSON almost heart-breaking. As forty years ago citizens gathering in the streets of Paris cried aloud, "Nous sommes trahis," so the EX-ATTORNEY-GENERAL with a sob in his voice re-



"Mr. Speaker! There's no doubt about it, we're bein' hombogged!!—hombogged!!"
Sir Edward Carson.

peated the plaint, "We are being hombogged." In vain PREMIER explained it was a business arrangement which



COUSIN HUGH WRITHING IN THE DEADLY COILS OF AN IRISH "BULL!"

"The Government desired to kill one Assembly by a blow, and to destroy the other Assembly by the slow poison of the guillotine."
—Lord Hugh Cecil.

obviously carried recommendation of saving time. What was the use of introducing a Bill in the Commons? After spending weeks upon moulding it into shape it would go to the Lords and be rejected. Let the Lords fire first.

CARSON, weeping at fresh evidence of Ministerial duplicity, would not be comforted.

"We are being hombogged," he crooned, as if he were assisting at a wake; "hombogged."

Business done.—House sat up late with Veto Resolutions.

Thursday.—The long, occasionally dragged debate on first Veto Resolution closed amid turbulent scene. Arranged that at half-past ten knife of the guillotine should fall, lopping off amendments and speeches. PREMIER spoke early in sitting. FLUELLEN LLOYD GEORGE before the dinner hour contributed to the making of the salad the necessary quota of oil. To the new SOLICITOR-GENERAL was left the honourable task of winding up the debate, sending the majority off into Lobby in high spirits. Fine opportunity, of which RUFUS ISAACS was safely counted upon to make the most.

Sat with growing impatience whilst the Member for Swansea Town spoke for *tout le monde*. After him came TERRELL.

Then DON'T KEIR HARDIE, with his pompous, judicial air, his habit of saying nothing particular in long sentences delivered with slow intonation, so that no one should run risk of missing a precious syllable.

When he sat down finger of the clock seemed almost to touch the half-hour. As matter of microscopical accuracy, three minutes were left to spokesman of the Government.

RUFUS ISAACS undismayed. Adjusting an impalpable wig, pulling over his shoulder an invisible gown, he remarked: "In the three minutes which remain, I will undertake to explain the difference between the two sides of the House."

He might have done it, too, but for SON AUSTEN. His interposition signal for outburst of angry shouts of "Order!" from Ministerialists, answered by strident cheers from Opposition. Above the din SON AUSTEN stood at the Table voiceless. SOLICITOR-GENERAL refused to give way. Pointing a hand to the clock, he dumbly pleaded that he had only two minutes and could not spare one for SON AUSTEN, who had earlier in debate enjoyed full fling. Thus they stood, divided by "the substantial piece of furniture" DIZZY once publicly thanked Heaven separated him from GLADSTONE.

Shouts of "Order!" and strident cheering continued. Steadily the hand of the clock moved on. When it passed the half-hour the CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES rose, and the speechless orators, glaring



THE HUNT STEEPLECHASE SEASON.

First Horseman (bringing up the rear of a large field). "I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE THE PACE FOR US?"

Second Horseman. "NO FEAR, OLD CHAP! IF ONE OF THAT CROWD IN FRONT COMES DOWN, I'D RATHER BE ON TOP OF THE HEAT THAN AT THE BOTTOM, THANK YOU."

at each other across the Table, resumed their seats, neither having had opportunity of saying what he thought of the other.

Strangers in crowded Gallery looked on pleased and proud at this method of conducting business in the home of the Mother of Parliaments.

Business done.—First Veto Resolution carried by 339 votes against 237.

A SPRIG OF EDELWEISS.

The sun was setting; the snow mountains were pink in the glow. In the valleys the pines came down to the edge of the lake, whose surface was smooth as a mirror. In the distance came the thud, thud of a lake steamer homeward bound.

Suddenly the door opened and the Count entered my room. He was radiant. He struck an attitude denoting triumph. The Count was a tall lean man and quite frank about his appearance. He knew he was lean. He revelled in it. He said that without leanness his poses would be absurd, and without poses life would be unendurable. He sometimes stood outside himself, and laughed at the figure he cut. But usually he remained within and supervised all the important features of the pose. "A successful pose," he used to say, "always trembles on the verge of disaster. At

the very height of the dramatic one may touch the ludicrous, and there's an end of it."

The Count was triumphant but calm. I saw it was the Napoleonic pose, the strong will and terrific personality. I offered him a chair. The Count relaxed so far as to smack me on the back. "My friend," he said solemnly, "it is done. To-morrow I introduce you to the future Countess de la Croix."

I congratulated him warmly, but with all the deference due to the dignity of the situation.

"What a woman," he murmured, "what spirit, and yet what tenderness!"

He mused a moment in silence.

"Don't say romance is dead," he cried, and glared on me.

I hurriedly deprecated any insinuation whatever. The Count softened. The curtain had dropped on the Napoleonic pose. He was now the ardent lover, ready to face anything. He lit a cigarette and blew rings airily.

"Listen, my friend," he began; "I went to her yesterday morning. She received me kindly, but not as I had hoped. I offered her my heart, my title, my very life. She asked the last. Ah, you may well start. What a woman! What a mother of lions! I too was taken aback. 'Mademoiselle,' I cried, throwing myself at her feet, 'it is a poor thing, but take it when you will.' My

friend, I was magnificent. And she—she was superb. Quite calmly she said no man could win her hand who could not win her admiration.

"What shall I do?" I cried. I was ready to swim the lake, to do anything.

"There is edelweiss on the mountains," she said quietly, and hummed a tune.

"But, Mademoiselle," I gasped.

"Since you are afraid," she began coldly.

I rose with dignity.

"It is certain death," I said with admirable composure, "but it is nothing. It is already done. Mademoiselle, good-bye."

"That I think you will admit was a fine scene. If I had closed the door and gone away at once, it would have been unequalled, but I could not resist a little glance back, so I reopened the door and peeped in. She was reading the newspaper. What a woman!

I hired six guides and started. 'Where you will,' I cried. It may have been the Matterhorn. Possibly it was only Mont Blanc.

"Ach," they said, "it is dangerous."

I frowned gloomily on them.

"Ach," I replied, "the edelweiss I must and shall have at all costs."

"Schaffhausen!" they cried; "the lean gentleman has the courage of ten chamois."

I bowed.

We started.

I carried an alpenstock, an umbrella, and her photograph. It is a large portrait, so I strapped it on the back of the guide in front, and it gave me courage. With stern faces we took the road. How the crowds cheered! They love a brave man, these Swiss. Would my Angela could have seen me. And then the silence of the Alps! For thousands of feet I did not speak, and when I did it was only to cry, '*Courage, mes braves*,' and prod the guide before me with my umbrella. I slipped. Death seemed inevitable. I hooked the nearest guide with my alpenstock. Saved—at least I was. But I will not weary you with all the details of that perilous journey. Besides," added the Count as an afterthought, "modesty forbids.

At last I saw the edelweiss pure and white as newly-fallen snow. I unconsciously struck an attitude full of simple dignity. I expected the guides to burst into song. They would not meet my eye. I admit it was a grave risk. 'Cowards,' I shouted, 'who will come with me?' Not a man moved."

There was a dramatic pause. The Count shrugged his shoulders. "What would you?" he said. "I went alone, yes, I, Rupert de la Croix went—alone." I took his hand, unable to speak. With an effort he continued, "At last I touched—I held it in my grasp. I hate to talk of these exploits. Some of us will do anything for the glory of it."

I squeezed his hand.

The Count was now the bored hero of a hundred fights.

"Let us speak of something else," he said wearily.

"The Countess," I murmured, "what of her?"

He was again the ardent lover.

"Ah, my Angela, *ma petite*! Tired and travel-stained though I was, I hastened to her. I slowly opened the door. I began to feel weak with the strain. She rose to greet me. On my knees I took her hand and in it laid the sprig of edelweiss.

'You've brought it,' she cried and paled.

'Yes, Mademoiselle,' I answered quite quietly, 'you mentioned your desire, *n'est-ce-pas*?'"

She stared at me in a daze. I rose, and looked down into her eyes that can gleam like cold steel, but were now as soft as a deer's.

'Angela,' I whispered, 'it is nothing. Believe me, I would do more, much more; only, when you look at it, think sometimes of the risks it took to win, of the solitary heights in which I sought it before it came to this fair Lucerne.'

She burst into tears. It may seem foolish, but I too wept like a child."

"And then?" I queried.

The Count raised his eyebrows and smiled quite naturally.

"My friend," he said, "what could I do but take her in my arms?"

* * * * *

There is a little shop in Lucerne that has had four sprays of edelweiss in the window for many weeks. As I passed it next day with the Count, I observed that there were only three. I turned to my companion.

But the Count at that moment was preoccupied.

AN INN SCENE.

It was a longer walk from Hendon than I had expected, and I was not at Hampstead till half-past eleven; and it was therefore with satisfaction that I noticed the words, "Hot Suppers," on a strip of paper in the window of the "Crown." That was exactly what I wanted and should be too late for by the time I reached London.

While I was sitting in the friendly bar, reading the evening paper, the door opened and an inquiring head was thrust in. A body followed, lurched a little, and leaned against the wall. It was a tall man of forty or so, plainly but well dressed. His right hand clutched a stick, his left waved a cigar. A good-natured weak face, regular enough to be called handsome by a poor judge. Black bright eyes. After looking at me for a few moments with the benignity of the slightly unmannered, the stranger asked, "Are you the boss?"

"No," I said.

"Then," he inconsequently replied, "give us a tune." (There was an automatic melodion in the corner.)

Before I could answer, the host appeared, bringing supper, and stood in the middle of the room watching my approval.

While he was waiting the stranger crossed the floor unsteadily until he was within two feet of him. "Are you the boss?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Freeman, I'm the boss," said the landlord.

The man was puzzled, as his face showed.

"Mr. Freeman!" he repeated. "How do you know my name?"

"Ah, I know more than that, Mr. Michael Owen Freeman," said the landlord inscrutably.

"Why, who are you?" the stranger asked.

"Ewell," replied the landlord. "Cheedle's farm. The Blue Posts."

The stranger's mental feelers grasped vainly at these hints, and the landlord smiled the smile of a clever sober fellow with a tippler at his mercy.

"Emily," said the landlord.

The name was illuminative. "What,"

cried the stranger in a warm flush of recognition—"what, you're not Harry Evans?"

"Yes," said the landlord, with a touch of embarrassment, for it is difficult to share this kind of effusion.

"Not Harry Evans of Ewell—old Harry!" (He pronounced the first syllable of "Harry" as though it rhymed to "bar.")

"Yes," said the landlord, almost wishing he wasn't.

"Then give us your hand," said the stranger.

They shook hands.

"Straight?" the stranger inquired a little suspiciously.

"Straight," said the landlord.

"Then give us your hand."

They shook hands again.

"You're not kidding me?" the stranger asked in another visitation of doubt.

"Honour bright, I'm not," said the landlord.

"Then give us your hand."

They shook hands again.

"Well, I'm dashed," said the stranger.

"What'll you take?" suggested the landlord, perceptibly eager to end these demonstrations. "Say the word and you can have what you like—champagne, port, whisky—"

"A drop o' Scotch, cold," said the stranger, adding, "Is it really old Harry Evans? Well, I'm— Here, shake hands once more."

But the landlord had gone for the drinks.

Mr. Freeman rocked insecurely from toe to heel for ten seconds; then he turned to me. "'V' you read DICKENS?" he asked.

I said I had.

It must have sounded curt, for "You're not cross, are you?" he asked, with a touch of anxiety.

"No, I'm not cross," I replied.

"Then give us your hand," he said.

We shook hands.

"DICKENS is full of take-backs, isn't he?" he remarked.

"Full," I replied.

"You're not cross, are you?" he asked again.

I said I was not in the least cross.

He appeared satisfied, and resumed.

"Well, of all the take-backs in DICKENS there isn't one to beat this. . . ."

He was silently ruminative.

"To think," he began again—"to think of meeting— You're not cross, are you? You didn't mind me mistaking you for the boss?"

I satisfied him again, and we shook hands on it.

"To think," he continued, "of meeting old Harry Evans. After all these years too. We used to court the same girl. That was at Ewell. And to think

of him landlord of the 'Crown' and me with thirty bob a week. You're not cross, are you?"

"Cross? No," I said with emphasis.

"Then give us your hand."

We shook hands again.

Mr Freeman looked at me cunningly and began once more. "He owes me four shillings," he said softly. "He lost it to me at Nap twelve years ago, and I mean to have it. And now I know where he is, I'm going to work this place for all it's worth. I haven't used a bad word to-day, but, if you'll excuse me, I don't mind saying that I'm going to give this place blunkey socks. Old Harry Evans, the landlord of the 'Crown,' is he? All right."

He became more confidential. "I don't mind telling you," he said, "that I've had too much to drink. In point of fact, I'm drunk. But I shan't let old Harry know. O crikey, no! I mean to do him for that four bob. Every penny of it. You see."

He wandered out, and the landlord came back with the glasses.

"That's a rum thing," said the landlord to me. "I haven't seen that man for these twelve years, and we used to be always together. We courted the same girl. Strangely enough, she's coming to tea to-morrow with my wife. He was as sharp and clever a young fellow as you'd meet. An architect doing his five hundred a year easily. But he took to drink and flung his money about. Treated everybody. And then he was sacked—he was surveyor to a Local Board—and disappeared."

Here Mr. Freeman returned and shook hands with the landlord again and talked of old times. They recalled larks together, lark after lark, until very skilfully Mr. Freeman led the conversation to cards, and suddenly remarked, "By the way, Harry, do you know you owe me two-and-eightpence?"

The landlord was incredulous.

"Yes," said Mr. Freeman, "at Charley Perrott's one night, Number 13, Hamilton Crescent. When we left off you owed me two-and-eightpence. Ask Charley."

"Very well," said the landlord, "I always pay my just debts. Here you are," and he counted out two-and-eightpence.

Mr. Freeman drew himself up with dignity, and, standing as steadily as might be, fixed an offended eye on his companion. "What!" he said, "do you think I'm a man that takes paltry gambling debts twelve years after they're made? No, Sir. I may be low, but I'm not so low as that. Put it in the box." (There was a hospital collecting box on the mantelpiece.) "I don't want the money. I'm poor, but I've always got enough for a drink for a pal. But



-A.T. SMITH

"AND WHERE IS YOUR SAILOR SON NOW?"

"WELL, I DON'T RIGHTLY MIND, MUM, IF HE BE GONE TO GIBRALTAR IN THE JUPITER, OR TO JUPITER IN THE GIBRALTAR, BUT IT BE SOMEWHERE IN THEM PARTS."

I like to see debts paid. Put it in the box."

The landlord acquiesced, and Mr. Freeman sat down again and drank some more whisky.

"I like you, Evans," he said; "I like you and I like your house. And I'm coming here often. And not alone, mind. The next time I come I shall bring a gang of the boys with me, and we'll do you proud."

The landlord was grateful. "Have another drink," he said.

"All right!" said Mr. Freeman. "I'm on the ran-dan to-night."

The landlord rang for more whisky and they talked on. Five minutes before closing time Mr. Freeman felt strong enough to mention his old love.

"Do you ever see Emily?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said the landlord. "She's

coming here to-morrow to have tea with my wife."

"Still unmarried?" asked Mr. Freeman.

"Yes," said the landlord.

Mr. Freeman finished his whisky and threw away his cigar. Then he stood up and buttoned his coat and turned towards the door.

The landlord waited. I waited.

Mr. Freeman braced himself for an effort. "Tell her," he said, "that I'm twelve years older, and I've only got thirty shillings a week instead of ten pounds, but if she's agreeable she can have me still. Good night." And he staggered to the door and out into the street.

The landlord reached up to turn out the gas as I rose to go. "Drink is his ruin," he said comfortably. "Good night."

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

THE scheme of two pairs of lovers who execute a *chassée croisée* has already been used by ANNE SEDGWICK in her remarkable book, *Valerie Upton*. In *Franklin Kane* (ARNOLD) she makes a variation on this well-established manœuvre by re-distributing her couples, and so restoring the *status quo*. The process is not really so absurd as it sounds; for the author is almost painfully sincere in her analysis of motives, and allows no one to speak or smile, or even breathe, without so many good reasons that you are sure it must be right. And, if she had seen well to extend her story—rather too long as it is—and arranged a re-redistribution, I am convinced she would have found means to persuade me that everything was still all right. For, to be frank, I take her word for the behaviour of types which I never quite realise. *Gerald*, with his contented egoism, is the easiest to believe in, being the least complex; yet I have my doubts of a man of quick intelligence who, all his life, can keep up the closest of friendships with a woman of his own kind without once suspecting that she wants something closer still. *Helen*, again, child of the moors and mists, who nurses her unspoken passion, and drifts desolately and cheaply about the continent without any taste for its attractions, her heart being in the Highlands all the time, is a character that appeals warmly to the heart but coldly to the intellect. *Althea*, with her Bostonian "standards" and her terribly healthy interest in Europe, "in everything that is of the best—pictures, music, places and people" (she reminds me a little of the unassailable *Imogen* in *Valerie Upton*), is a type which I am certain that ANNE SEDGWICK has drawn with authority, yet I can only accept her blindly on trust. Finally, with *Franklin Kane*, admirable creature that he is, the author has not quite succeeded, as Miss SINCLAIR succeeded in *The Divine Fire*, in converting a ridiculous object into a figure of high romance. Probably this was not her intention, for she can do most things that she wants to. But if she has failed in this or any other purpose I confess I would choose her failures rather than the success of a hundred others. She is, of course, in the first rank of modern novelists, and nobody who cares for good work can afford to miss one line that she writes.

When, upon the second page of *The Island Providence* (JOHN LANE), an experienced reader finds the warning, "Now this is no milk-and-water tale, but a tale of salt seas," he will probably think that he can give a fair guess at what will follow. "STEVENSON!" says he to himself, already scenting blood. By-and-by, however, he will find, with some natural bewilderment, that though Mr. FREDERICK NIVEN hints at battles and murders in plenty the leader he follows is not R. L. S., but rather MEREDITH, or even perhaps JAMES (HENRY). The result, as I say, is confusion. An introspective pirate, however possible, is so little what usage has led us to expect as to be by no means easy of belief. Further, *John Upcott* strikes one as unconvincingly modern

for a hero of 1645, the date of the tale. Having slain his disreputable father in a wrecker's brawl, he runs away to sea, takes part in the sack of Cartagena, is made a slave, liberated, becomes the beloved of a Spanish dame, then a refugee again, and finally a successful buccaneer—from which last phase he returns to Devonshire, flinging his ill-gotten gains overboard, and landing as poor as when he left. A life so crowded with incident would have (one thinks) small leisure for the moods and subtleties and the yearning for "self-realisation" from which we are told that *John* continually suffered. Anyhow, I like my pirates simpler, and would sooner walk the plank to an accompaniment of oaths than of philosophy. But for all this I have my prophetic eye upon Mr. NIVEN, of whom I think to hear more in the future.

Accomplished master of the matrimonial hunt as Mr. PERCY WHITE is, I wish that intriguing men and women could be protected from him by a close time. In *An Averted Marriage*, an extremely outspoken tale which gives the title to his volume of short stories (MILLS AND BOON), the author devotes eighty pages to an old gentleman in search of a young wife; and I don't think it was worth while. One



PROBABLE SCENE OUTSIDE THE HOLBORN RESTAURANT IN THE EVENT OF A REPETITION OF THE BANQUET TO THE DESCENDANTS OF POETS.

Mob of Descendants of "Anon" claiming admittance.

fears that Mr. WHITE found this story very easy to write, and as an admirer of his I should like to add that I found it very difficult to read. I am tired, in fact, of Mr. WHITE's characteristic vein, and my thankfulness to him is great when he gets away from it, as in some stories here which make ample compensation for "An Averted Marriage." "Abdoolah," "The Model" and "The Canary" are pathetic and haunting, and to-day, when an unmarried political candidate would seem to be incompletely equipped for the fray, "The Stockings"

comes as a delightfully humorous warning to tactless wives. But it is "The Swimmers" which really has my vote, and makes me certain that Mr. WHITE is something more than a rather flippant and clever novelist.

Among the convenient realities which form the stock-in-trade of romantic novelists the Foreign Legion occupies a position of very much the same value as the Sargasso Sea. As to this may drift all marine derelicts, so to that may drift all human ones. With the writer of fiction nothing, in its kind, is too extraordinary for either; and, so far at least as one of them is concerned, Mr. ERWIN ROSEN's book, *In the Foreign Legion* (Duckworth), proves that the writer of fiction is amply justified in giving himself a good deal of rope. For Mr. ROSEN's book is not fiction. It is a fascinating, vivid record of actual experiences. In a brief "Prologue," curiously strained and self-conscious compared with the remainder of the work, he explains how, having led a roving, eventful life, he lost "the jewel happiness," and decided to enlist. The Prologue off his chest, he gives a wonderfully illuminating account of the existence of the legionaries, and of the training, quite cheap, which produces splendidly efficient mercenaries who march well, shoot well, use common sense, and are able to act independently. It is a fine book, and to novelists who wish to follow, say, Mr. A. E. W. MASON, it should be as useful a volume of reference as *Debrett* to the tuft-hunter.